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UNCLAS VIENNA 003407

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR IO/UNESCO AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNESCO CULTURAL DIVERSITY VOTE -- URGENT DEMARCHE

DELIVERED TO AUSTRIA

REF: A. (A) STATE 192656

[1](#)B. (B) VIENNA 3397 AND PREVIOUS

This cable is Sensitive But Unclassified. Please treat accordingly.

[1](#)1. (U) Upon receipt of ref (a), Embassy formally delivered the diplomatic note on the UNESCO Cultural Diversity Convention to the Austrian government, via the Foreign Ministry. EconPolCouns and Econ Unit Chief concurrently delivered copies of the diplomatic note and ref (a) talking points to senior officials in the Foreign and Economics Ministries, respectively.

[1](#)2. (U) Frieda Luggauer-Gollner, the MFA's Assistant Secretary-level Director for Multilateral Foreign Cultural SIPDIS

and UNESCO Affairs, expressed appreciation for our efforts to make our views clear. Luggauer-Gollner noted that Austria has supported the concept of the Cultural Diversity Convention since the idea first arose. In conjunction with other EU member states and with other members of UNESCO, Austria has worked closely on the development of the current text. The draft convention reflects a long period of serious discussions. Austria "fully supports" the text which has emerged.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Luggauer-Gollner said that Austria considered paragraph 2 of Article 20 of the draft convention to prevent an interpretation of the Cultural Diversity Convention as taking precedence over other international agreements.

(Note: The relevant language states, "Nothing in this Convention shall be interpreted as modifying rights and obligations of the Parties under any other treaties to which they are parties." End note.) We urged Luggauer-Gollner to instruct the Austrian delegation to make a statement to this effect in order to clarify the record for future interpretation. Luggauer-Gollner undertook to discuss our request with Austria's interagency community.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Gabriela Habermayer, the head of the Ministry of Economics and Labor's Multilateral Trade Affairs Division, told us that Austria believed the Cultural Diversity

Convention and WTO obligations did not conflict, but were mutually supportive. Pressed, she agreed that the French Culture Minister's statements about the precedence of the Cultural Diversity Convention could presage an attempt on the part of France and others to use the convention as a lever in WTO discussions. However, she believed this would be certain to fail in the face of the existing consensus on the nature and scope of the convention.

van Voorst